

4452-633
Fellowship with the Blessed Trinity.

A

S E R M O N

On I JOHN i. 7.

Preached on a Sacramental Occasion at DUNFERMLINE; and enlarged upon at a Solemnity of the same Nature at DALKEITH, 1766.

B Y

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Minister of the Gospel at KIRKCALDY.

PUBLISHED BY PARTICULAR DESIRE.

Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with the Son, Jesus Christ.

I JOHN i. 3.

G L A S G O W:

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S E R M O N.

I JOHN i. 7.

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another: and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.

THINGS glorious are said of the godly: they have a glorious character. If it be asked, what was the character of Enoch? I answer, He had this testimony, that he *walked with and pleased God*, Gen. v. 22. Heb. xi. 5. What was Noah's character? He was a just man, and perfect in his generations: and *Noah walked with God*, Gen. vi. 9. What was Abraham's character? He was the *friend of God*, Jam. ii. 23. The *father of the faithful*: and, in the same sense, some think Eve is called the *mother of all living*. What was Barnabas's character? He was a *good man, full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith*, Acts xi. 24.—If now ye enquire, What it is to *walk with God*, to be the *friend of God*, to be *good men*, and *full of the Holy Ghost*, and of *faith*? I answer, It is to *walk in the light as God is in the light*, and to *have fellowship, one with another: and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth such from all sin.*

In verse 5th the Apostle says, *This is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, &c.* Of whom did the Apostles hear this message? Of HIM, says John; that is, of CHRIST, whom he describes verse first, to be the *word of life*; and ver. 2d to be *manifested*: *The life was manifested*, viz. in *flesh*; so that we, with our eyes, have seen, that *Word as manifested in flesh*, John i. 14. and our hands have handled of that Word. In Luke xxiv. 39. Jesus says unto his Apostles, *handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.* Thus he brings in the operation of three senses, as vouchers of, and witnesses unto, the certainty of what he declared: as if he had said, we are sure of his incarnation, by the ears, by the eyes, and by the hands; and so here is an elegant gradation: to *see*, is more than to *hear*; and to *handle*, more than to *see*; to *see*, carries a greater evidence of truth than to *hear*; and to *handle*, carries a greater evidence of truth than to *see*.—Further, what is the *subject matter* of the message? They heard of HIM; John says, they *heard of him, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all*; that is, God is a God of knowledge: God is wisdom, and in him is no folly at all. God is a God of truth: God is faithfulness, and in him is no dissimulation at all. God is a God of purity: God is holiness, and in him is no impurity at all. God is a God of amity: God is love, and in him is no enmity, no malice, at all: *Fury*, says he, *is not in me.*

The Apostle, from this message, deduces two Inferences.

1st, If God be *light*, then it follows, as a necessary consequence, *if we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lye, and do not the truth.* If we say we have fellowship with him; that is, if we *profess* we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness; that is, live in the commission of any known sin, and omission of known duties, we lie, and do not the truth; that is, our practice gives the lie to our profession: doing what makes our profession false and insincere.

2^{dly}, If God be *light*, then it also follows, if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another; and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. Where notice,

1. A privilege, the very top privilege of Christianity, we have fellowship one with another. The original word, Κοινωνία, is by some rendered *communion*, by others *converse*, and by our translators *fellowship*: in the sequel we will exclude none of these; but include each of them. We have fellowship, not simply with *propositions*, but with *persons*; and not merely with *human*, with *angelic*, but with *divine* persons: with the *Father*, and with the *Son*, as in verse 3. Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son. What, John! is it so that you and others have fellowship with the Father, and the Son: truly, says he, it is so; TRULY our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We have fellowship with Christ, as a mediator; and Christ, as mediator, hath fellowship with us; we have fellowship with God in Christ; and

God in Christ hath fellowship with us ; one with another : Christ with us, and we with Christ ; God with us, and we with God. Observe,

2. How this fellowship is *evidenced* ; by *walking in the light*, as *God is in the light* : *If we walk in the light, as God is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.* Notice,

3. How this fellowship is *maintained*, by the *blood of Jesus* : and the *blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*—The main thing, as I apprehend, in this text is *fellowship* ; and so the first and last clause shall be considered only as far as they are subservient unto, and connected therewith.

Waving the formality of a Doctrine, the method in which I would, through divine aid, prosecute this subject, may be the following.

I. To offer two or three *meditations*, or *remarks*, for preventing mistakes.

II. Enquire what this fellowship *supposes*.

III. Point out wherein this fellowship *consists*.

IV. Shew how this fellowship is *evidenced*.

V. Enquire how this fellowship is *maintained*.

VI. Apply the whole *Subject*.

I. The first Head was to offer two or three *remarks* for preventing mistakes.

Remark 1. When God created man, man had *fellowship* with God, and God had fellowship with man ; for God not only made man upright, Eccl. vii. 29. but also made a *covenant* with him, promi-

sing him, and his posterity *life*, upon condition of his perfect obedience : so much is imported clearly, in the *threatening of death*, in case of disobedience, Gen. ii. 17. Thus Adam was God's confederate, heaven's favourite ; and while he stood, tho' he was alone in the world, yet he was not alone, for God was with him.

Remark 2. Adam, and all his posterity, *lost fellowship* with God by the fall : and hence our first parents, immediately upon the first sin, essayed to run from the presence of God, and to hid themselves among the trees of the Garden, Gen. iii. 8. compared with Isa. lix. 2. *Your iniquities have separated betwixt you and your God.* All men by nature are, as the Ephesians were, chap. ii. 12. *At that time ye were without Christ, having no hope, and without God in the world.* Chap. iv. 18. *Alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them.* Acts ii. 39. Men are said to be *far off*, not in respect of any *local* distance, for God is every where : *Enter potenter ubique presenter* ; that is, " God is in all places by his essence and power : " but men are said to be *afar off*, in respect of *moral* distance : they are far off from the *knowledge* of God, from the *favour* of God, from the *image* of God, and from the *enjoyment* of God.

Remark 3. Man's fellowship with God is *restored* by the mediation of Christ ; *I restored that which I took not away*, Psa. lxix. 4. Christ took not away man's fellowship with God ; nevertheless he restored it, and that by his own mediation. Eph. ii. 18. *Thro'*

him [i. e. thro' his blood] *we both* [viz. Jews and Gentiles] *have an access, by one Spirit, unto the Father.* John x. 9. *I am the door, and by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved ;* that is, I am the door of admission, whereby lost sinners may enter into the gracious presence of God here, and unto the glorious presence of God hereafter, and so shall obtain salvation. This leads me,

II. To the second Head, which was to enquire what this fellowship *supposes.*

1st, It supposes a removal of those *bars* which lay in the way of our access to God.

1. We being sinners, God's *justice* lay in the way as a bar to our access to God ; for, Exod. xxxiv. 7. *He will by no means clear the guilty.* Now, Christ removed this bar by his obedience unto death ; by his bearing the punishments due to us for sin. 1 Peter ii. 24. *He his own self did bear our sin in his own body on the tree ;* that is, he did bear the punishment of our sin in his own body on the cross ; compared with chap. iii. 18. *Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God ;* that is, to the knowledge of God, to the favour of God, to the image of God, and to the enjoyment of God.

2. Our *nature*, as corrupted, being the very reverse of God's nature, lay as another bar in the way of our access to God ; for, Amos iii. 9. *Can two walk together except they be agreed ?* 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15. *What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness ? and what communion hath light with*

darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial?

Now, Christ removes this bar also, by putting his spirit into us, Ezek. xxxvi. 27. *I will put my spirit into you*; and thereby we are quickened. John vi. 63. *It is the spirit that quickeneth*. Thereby our nature is renewed, Titus iii. 5. Thereby we are renewed in the whole man; in the understanding, will, memory, conscience, affections, and in the use of the members of the body: Thereby the divine nature, or habits of grace, are infused and drawn forth into exercise; and as reason, and the exercise of it, renders us sociable with creatures like ourselves, so the divine nature, or habits of grace, makes us sociable with God himself, and God with us.

2dly, It supposes *union*: Christ, as mediator, is united to believers, and believers are united to him as such: and hence, in John xiv. 20. He says, *I in you, and you in me*. The law-union betwixt Christ and believers is peculiar to them; for he only, of the three persons, was their surety: but the union made up by the Spirit is not so limited to the Son; no, no: through the Son they are united unto the Father also; and hence, in 1 Thess. i. 1. *The Church of the Thessalonians are said to be in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ*: and as they are united to God, so God is united to them; and hence they are said to *dwell* in God, and God in them, 1 John iv. 16. As union to God is the root of fellowship, or communion; so fellowship, or communion, is a fragrant flower growing out of that blessed root.

3dly, It supposes *presence* : God is with believers, Heb. xiii. 5. and believers are with God, Psal. lxxiii. 23. *I am continually with thee : thou hast holden me by thy right hand*, viz. as the tender-hearted father holds his child : even then when *I was as a beast before thee*, Verse 22. The Lord said to Joshua, Chap i. 5. *As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee*. If Joshua had not always the same presence of mind which Moses had ; yet he had always the same presence of God, and that is enough to a believer.

III. The third head, was to enquire, wherein this fellowship *consists*. To this we reply,

1st, There is the fellowship of *Co-partnership* betwixt Christ, as mediator, and believers ; which consists in his and their sharing jointly in the same privileges : he, according to his measure, and they according to their measure of his fellowship. We read, Rom. viii. 17. *If children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ*. He the primary, and they the secondary heirs. Christ and believers have *one Father, one God*, John xx. 17. He and they have *one spirit*, 1 Cor. 6. 17. *If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his*. He and they have *one righteousness, one robe*, Rom. iii. 21, 22. *The righteousness of God is unto all, and upon all them that believe*. He and they shall have *one house to lodge in*, John xiv. 2, 3. *I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there ye may be also*. He and they shall have *one kingdom to reign*

in, Luke xxli. 29. *I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father appointed unto me.* 2 Tim. ii. 12. *If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him.* He and they shall have *one throne* to sit upon, Rev. iii. 21. *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne.* He and they shall have *one joy* to be full of, Matth. xxv. 21. *Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*

2dly, There is the fellowship of *interest* betwixt God, the blessed Three, and believers; which consists in their being the *mutual property* of one another: God is their *property*, and they are God's property. Of this fellowship we read, Jer. xxxi. 33. *This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel, I will be their God, and they shall be my people.* God is their portion, Psa. xvi. 5. And they are God's portion, Deut. xxxii. 9. He is theirs by his own consent, and they are his by their consent: And his consent to be theirs, influences their consent to be his. His wisdom is theirs, to direct them; his power is theirs, to protect them; his holiness is theirs, to sanctify them; his justice is theirs, to justify them; his mercy is theirs, to commiserate them; his faithfulness is theirs, to perform the promises to them; his infinity is their store, his eternity is the duration of their felicity; his unchangeableness the rock of their stability: *He gives them all things richly to enjoy,* 1 Tim. vi. 17. God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, being their God, all that he hath is a consequential appendix to himself.—Upon the other hand, they are his *wholly*, in soul, spirit, and body; for they are the *temple* of

God, 1 Cor. iii. 16. And so every part of them is dedicated and consecrated to God : their body, that is the outer court ; their soul, that is the holy place ; their spirit, that is the holy of holies. " Spirit, says " Ketch, denotes a divine power and energy in a regenerate and sanctified soul ; by which it is carried " unto God," Luke i. 4, 6. They are his *for ever*, in life, in death, in time, and through eternity, Rom. xiv. 8. *Whether we live, we live unto the Lord ; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord : Therefore, whether we live, or die, we are the Lord's.* Song, ii. 16. *My beloved is mine, and I am his.*

3dly, There is the fellowship of *action* betwixt the Lord and believers ; of this we read, Song i. *Draw me, we will run after thee.* To draw, is God's act ; to run after the Lord, is the action of believers : being acted upon, they act. The fellowship of action is held forth in Scripture ;

1. By their *knowing* one another, John x. 14. *I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.* I know them, and they know me, in a peculiar manner. They know his voice, Song ii. 8. *The voice of my beloved, Behold he cometh.* And he knows their voice, Verse 14. *O my Dove, let me hear thy voice ; for sweet is thy voice.*

2. By their *approaching* and *drawing nigh* to one another, Jam. iv. 8. *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.* God draws nigh to us, by the assumption of our nature, that we might draw nigh to God, by this assumed nature : and hence, in Heb. x. 20. We are said to *draw near*,

through the veil, that is to say, his flesh. In Exod. xx. 21. *It is said Moses drew near to the thick darkness, where God was, knowing that God was his friend.* He was not afraid of the thick darkness since God, his friend, was there.

3. By their *waiting* upon one another, Isa. xxx. 18. *Therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you. The Lord is a God of judgment, and blessed are all they that wait for him.* There the Lord waits, and here his people wait; he waits that he may be gracious, and they wait until he be gracious.

4. By their *crowning* one another: the Lord crowns them with the crown of *loving kindness* and *tender mercy*, Psa. ciii. 2, 4. *Bless the Lord, O my soul, who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercy.* They crown the Lord with the crown of the *honour* of their *salvation*, Song iii. 11. *Behold King Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him.* Rev. xiii. 12. *On his head were many crowns.* Each of the innumerable company crowns Christ with the crown of the *honour* of his *salvation*. In Rev. iv. 10. The elders fall down before him, that sits on the throne, and cast their crowns before the throne, (as sensible of their unworthiness to wear them in his presence) saying, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour.*

5. By their *eating* and *drinking* with one another, Song v. 1. *I have eaten my honey-comb, with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat,*

O friends ; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O Beloved. Rev. iii. 20. *If any man open the door, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me.* There is an aloneness of Christ and the believer ; they two together are alone, supping hand to hand, as two friends at supper.

6. By their *embracing* and *kissing* one another, Song ii. 6. *His right hand doth embrace me.* Heb. xii. 13. *These all died in faith, and embraced the promises.* Christ embraces his people in his arms, and they embrace him with their hearts. The believer says, as in Song i. 2. *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth :* after one kiss let me have another. And Christ says, Psal. ii. 12. *Kiss ye the Son.*

4thly, There is the fellowship of *converse* betwixt the Lord and believers, which consists in their mutual communing and talking one with another. Of this fellowship we read, Exod. xxxiii. 11. *The Lord spake to Moses face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend.* Hosea ii. 14. *I will allure her, and I will speak comfortably unto her :* in the Hebrew, *to her heart.* O ! how great is the condescension and goodness of God, in stooping to talk friendly with man who is but a worm ! This fellowship of converse lies,

1. In expressing their *love* to one another : the Lord expresses his love to the believer, saying, as in Jer. xxxi. 3. *I have loved thee with an everlasting love :* and the believer expresses his love to the Lord, saying, as in John xxi. 15, 16, 17.

Thou knowest that I love thee. If ever I loved any thing, I love thee. No less than seven or eight times, in Psa. cxix. David says to the Lord, *I love thy law : O how do I love thy testimonies ! I love them exceedingly.* Whatever wit, ingenuity, or rhetoric a believer hath, there are times wherein the Lord hath the cream of them vented in strains of love to himself. The Spouse in Song ii. 5. says, *She was sick of love ;* and, O but that was a healthful sickness.

2. In expressing their *desires* after one another. The Lord expresses his desire towards the believer, saying, as in Luke xxii. 13. *With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you.* And says the Spouse, Song vii. 10. *I am my Beloved's, and his desire is towards me.*—And the believer expresses his desire towards the Lord, saying, as in Psa. lxxiii. 1, 2. *O Lord, my God, early will I seek thee : my soul thirsteth for thee ; my flesh longeth for thee in a dry land.* What ! was it any extraordinary business with God, which made him thus eager ? I answer, It was just to see God his exceeding joy, verse 2. *Whom have I in heaven but thee ? And there is none on earth I desire besides thee,* Psa. lxxiii. 25. *I desire more and more of thee. O when wilt thou come in kindness unto me ! Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like a roe.* It is my heart's desire to board with thee, by living on thy bounty ; and to bed with thee, by lying in thy bosom.

3. In expressing their *delight* in one another. The Lord expresses his delight in the believer, saying, as in Song vii. 6. *How fair ; and how pleasant art thou,*

O love, for delights. The Lord taketh pleasure in his people; and therefore says, Thou hast ravished my heart, my Sister, with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck.—And the believer expresses his delight in the Lord, saying, as in Psal. xciv. 19. In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul. Song ii. 3. I sat down under his shadow with great delight. And to delight ourselves in God, is the most compendious art of begging; it is the readiest and speediest way to get dispatch of all our particular suits. Delight thyself in God, and he will give thee the desires of thine heart, Psal. xxxvii. 4.

4. In expressing their joy in one another. The Lord rejoices in and over the believer, as the bridegroom in and over the bride, Zeph. iii. 17. *The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty: he will rejoyce over thee; he will joy over thee with singing.*—And the believer rejoices in the Lord, Psal. lxxiii. 7. *Because thou hast been my help, therefore in shadow of thy wings will I rejoyce.* Psal. lxxvii. 6. *I call to remembrance my Song in the night; that is, he considered the joyful intercourse he had with God, when God and he sang songs together, Acts xvi. 25. Paul and Silas, at midnight, sang praises unto God.*

5. In their commending one another. The Lord commends the believer, saying, as in Song iv. 7. *Thou art all fair, my Love; and there is no spot in thee.*—And the believer commends Christ, saying, as in Song. v. 10. *My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand; his head is as the*

most fine gold; his locks are bushy, or curled, and black as a raven: his eyes are as the eyes of doves. — His countenance is as Lebanon: his mouth is most sweet; yea, he is altogether lovely. Did you ever win so far ben, on your knees, as to have no more to say, But precious Christ, precious Christ, precious Christ; none but thee, none but thee, none but thee! Thou art fairer than the children of men; thou art more glorious than the mountains of prey.

6. I may say the fellowship of action and converse lies in their *justifying* one another. God justifies the believer, freely by his grace, Rom. iii. 25. And the believer justifies God in all his dealings with him, Luke vii. 35. *Wisdom is justified of all her children.* Many ridicule religion, many blaspheme God, open their mouths in language tending to the dishonour of God: but of Job it is said, chap. i. 22. *In all this Job did not attribute folly to God; did not charge God foolishly.* Yea, sooner or later, all God's children shall say, as in Mark vii. 37. *He hath done all things well.* All is well done God does. Further,

7. I may say the fellowship of action and converse lies in their *sanctifying* one another. God sanctifies the believer by his *word* and *Spirit*, making him holy, and to grow in holiness, John xvii. 17. — And the believer sanctifies God in his heart, by making him *his fear and dread*, Isa. viii. 13. 1 Peter iii. 15. *Sanctify the Lord of hosts, himself in your hearts: let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.* The believer sets up the Lord in his heart as his chief good, and chief end: the believer sets

the Lord before him, saying, *Thou God seeest me : thou knowest my down sitting, and mine up-rising ; thou understandest my thoughts afar off ; thou art acquainted with all my ways. There is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.*

Finally, to shut up this Head, I may observe, that the whole of the fellowship of co-partnership of interest, of action, and of converse will issue in their being *everlastingly glorified* in one another. The Lord will be eternally glorified in the believer, 2 Thess. i. 10. *The Lord Jesus shall come to be glorified in his saints ; and to be admired in all them that believe.*—And the believer will be eternally glorified in God, Rom. viii. 30. *Whom he did predestinate, them he also called ; and whom he called, them he also justified ; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.* I shall only add, that the two first kinds of fellowship respecting the believer's *state*, are always the same ; but the other two, respecting the believer's *case*, are very variable.

IV. The fourth Head, was to enquire how this fellowship is *evidenced*. I answer, in general, by *walking in the light, as God is in the light*. Expositors notice, that *walking* supposes *life*, and implies *motion* ; a voluntary motion, an uniform motion, a progressive motion, from one good work to another : according to the degree of the influence a man is under, such will his progress in godliness be.

What I propose here, is to answer two questions. 1. What is it for *God* to be in the light ? 2. What is it for *us* to walk in the light, as God is in the light ?

Quest. 1. *What it is for God to be in the light ?*

Answer 1. Christ is light, the *true light*, John i. 9. And so for God to be in the light, is to be in Christ : God is in Christ, Matth. iii. 17. *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.* 2 Cor. v. 19. *God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.* Where is, and where was God ? God is, and was, in CHRIST. What is, and what was God doing in Christ ? God is, and was in Christ, *well-pleased ; reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, &c.*

2. It is to be in himself, invironed and surrounded with the *brightness* and *splendor* of his own *perfections* ; especially his moral perfections ; as, his wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth : and hence he is said to *dwell in the light*, 1 Tim. vi. 16.

3. It is to be out of himself, exercised in these *actions* which are agreeable to the revelation he hath made of himself, Jer. ix. 24. *I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth.*

Quest. 2. *What is it for us to walk in the light, as God is in the light.*

Answer 1. It is to walk in Christ, Col. ii. 6. *As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.* As Christ comes in, self goes out ; the more a man walks in Christ, the more he walks out of self. As Christ is the *way*, so the Christian walks therein : is *of* Christ, as the author ; *through* Christ, as the altar of acceptance ; and *to* Christ, as the end,

or final clause. Rev. i. 8. *I am Alpha and Omega*, that is to say, *the beginning and the ending*. Rom. xi. 36. *Of him, and through him, and to him are all things : to whom be glory for ever.*

2. It is in our conversation to imitate God, in his imitable perfections and actions, Eph. iv. 32. and chap. v. 1. *God for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you: be ye therefore followers of God as dear children: the original term μιμηται, signifies imitators; be ye imitators of God as dear children, viz. in forgiving one another, because God hath forgiven you.* I may say, *to walk in the light as God is in the light*, is to be merciful, as God is merciful; so Christ expounds it, Luke vi. 36. It is to be holy, as God is holy; so Peter explains it, 1 Epist. i. 16. The *as* in the text, denotes not an equality, but a likeness: *if we walk in the light as he is in the light; that is, if we make a trade of holiness; if holiness be our business, as he is holy, we have fellowship one with another.* But say you, *darkness* is mixed with our *light*; and we make many out-of-the-way steps into the darkness of sin, as James says, chap. iii. 2. *In many things we offend all.* Are we thereby rejected and cast off? No, no: we are, notwithstanding, still retained in the family of God; for, *the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.* The copulative particle *and*, in the text, is *causal*, and signifies *because*; as if it had been said, notwithstanding of our sins we are not rejected of God, *because* the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin; and if from *all* sin, then not only from sin before conversion, but also from sin after conversion.

V. The fifth thing proposed, which is to enquire, *how this fellowship is maintained?* We answer, By the *blood* of Jesus Christ, God's Son, which cleanseth us from all sin. As the fellowship was *begun* by the blood of Jesus; so it is *carried on* by the blood of Jesus: for, our fellowship with God, while in the world, is a fellowship with God as a Saviour, and we as sinners. As we have sins to be cleansed, and Christ has blood to cleanse them, the blood of Jesus cleanseth us from sin past, present, and to come, as to the guilt of eternal wrath in justification, Psa. xxxii. 1, 2. And from this sin newly committed as to the guilt of fatherly anger, upon the renewed acts of faith, Psa. xxxii. 5. Although the corruption of nature remains, after justification, even as long as the soul remains in the body; yet it is not imputed, as to the guilt of eternal wrath, Rom. viii. 1. And as fast as the corruption of nature rises, or as often as sin appears, so often the blood of Jesus, used by faith, removes and takes them away out of the conscience, as to the guilt of fatherly anger, Rom. i. 16, 17. And in this manner the fellowship is maintained. Here we may answer two Questions. 1. How are we to understand the blood of Jesus? 2. How it cleanseth from all sin?

1. *How we are to understand the blood of Jesus here?* We answer, not *materially*; for blood, as such, bespots any thing on which it is dropped: but *morally*; for blood, as such, imports loss of life, as the expiation of, and as the satisfaction to the law, for the transgressions thereof. Thus in Num. xxxv.

33. It is said, *blood defileth the land; and the land cannot be cleansed of the blood that is shed therein; but by the blood of him that shed it: that is, the shedding of the blood of the innocent defiles the land; that is, lays the land obnoxious to judgment; but the shedding of the blood of the murderer cleanses the land; i. e. frees it from judgments.*

2. *How the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin?*

Answer 1. All manner of sin was *imputed* to the Son, God's holy one, Isa. liii. 6. 2 Cor. v. 20. *The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all. He made him sin for us who knew no sin.*

2. All manner of sin being imputed to the Son of God, he lost his *life*, in the human nature, as the *expiation* of, and as a *satisfaction* to the law for the same, 1 Cor. xv. 3. *Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.*

3. As soon as men *believe* in Christ, the blood of Christ is imputed to them, and thereby they are freed from the punishment of sin, Gal. iii. 15. *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, and so treated us as we had never been criminals.* The virtue of Christ's blood, conveyed as sprinkled on the conscience, is from the propitiation it made, as shed: and, in this manner, it cleanseth us from all sin.

VI. The last thing proposed was the *Application* of the Subject; which we shall essay in an use of information, reproof, and exhortation.

First, For information. From the text you may learn the following particulars.

1. Whence is it the ordinances are so *amiable* to believers: it is because therein they have *fellowship* with God. Psa. lxxxiv. 1. *How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!*—How amiable are the *sealing* ordinances, especially that of the supper? Song ii. 4. *He brought me to the banquetting house, and his banner over me was love.* In the supper, they eat that flesh, which is meat indeed; and drink that blood, which is drink indeed: not the flesh of fowls, but the flesh of God; not the blood of the grape only, but the blood of God. 1 Cor. x. 16. *The cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?*—How amiable is the ordinance of *meditation*, because therein they have many soliloquies, or discourses, with themselves about God?—How amiable is the ordinance of *preaching*, because therein God hath many colloquies, many discourses with them? Song ii. 10. *My beloved spake unto me and said, Rise my love, and come away.* The place where the gospel is preached is God's speaking place, Exod. xx. 24. —How amiable is the ordinance of *prayer*, because therein they have many colloquies, many discourses with God? Psa. v. 3. In prayer is exercised our close communion. As in and by the ministry of the word, God speaks to us; so in and by prayer we speak to God: by the first, God pours his heart into ours; and by the last, we pour ours into his.

2. Learn what is the main thing believers are *seeking* in the ordinances, it is *fellowship* with God. Psa. xxvii. 4. *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that I*

will seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord, to behold the beauty of the Lord. As Christ is the desire of all nations; so fellowship with Christ, and God in him, is the desire of every saint: as it is said, O grant me this one thing, I will bear the want of other things.—What are sacraments, what is meditation, what is preaching, what is praying, if I meet not with the Lord therein; if a believer meets not with the Lord in the ordinances, he is like a man travelling many miles to a place to meet a friend, upon an important affair, but not being there, he returns sad and dissatisfied. Fellowship with the Lord is the journey's end of ordinance: and if there be in men a backwardness to the ordinances, it can import nothing else, but a backwardness to the God of ordinances, to fellowship with God therein.

3. Learn what makes a man an agreeable companion to a believer; fellowship with God makes him such, Gal. ii. 9. *When James, Cephas, and John, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that is, they gave them the right hand as a sign of their acknowledging them to be fellows of their society, to be fellow-apostles, fellow-workers, and fellow-saints.* Zech. viii. 23. *Ten men shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you; there is the powerful attractive, God is with you.* The graceless, great, and sensual worldlings, all a man can carry away from the company of such is guilt and grief: and therefore to thy soul say, *O my soul, come not thou into their secret; and unto their assembly, mine honour be not thou united.*

4. Learn how *happy* believers are; they have fellowship with God, Deut. xxxiii. 27. *Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee?* What is happiness? Neither the ambitious man's answer to this question, nor the voluptuous man's reply, nor the sensual man's answer, nor the philosophic man's reply, are to be admitted of. Christ says, *There is none good but one, that is God*: and so it must be happiness to enjoy that one, Psa. cxvi. 7. It is happiness to enjoy God in Christ. In our Shorter Catechism it is said, "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and enjoy him for ever." But what is it to enjoy God? It is to have *fellowship* with God; it is to have the fellowship of co-partnership with Christ; it is to have the fellowship of interest; the fellowship of action; the fellowship of converse with God. To illustrate this, a certain divine bids us ask damned spirits, Why they are miserable? they must say, Because they have not *fellowship* with God: ask why there is nothing in hell but *darkness*? They must say, Because they have not fellowship with the *Father of lights*. Ask why there is nothing in hell but *weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth*? They must say, Because they have no fellowship with the *Father of Consolation*. Ask why there is nothing in them, but the *worm that dieth not*? They must say, Because they have no fellowship with him that died for sinners.—Fellowship with God, as vouchsafed here, is the beginning of heaven on earth; and as vouchsafed hereafter, it is the height of happiness. If a man could be in heaven without this fellowship, he could want heaven even in heaven: a believing man

accounts nothing misery, but to be separated from God ; and nothing blessedness, but the fruition of God. The Marquis of Vico, for Christ's sake, having left his estate, wife, and children in Italy, whom he tenderly loved, and being urged to return, refused, " Let his money perish with him " who prefers all the wealth and riches of the world " to one day's communion with Christ."

5. Learn how *honourable* believers are: they have fellowship with God, Deut. xxvi. 18, 19. *The Lord hath avouched thee to be his peculiar people ; and to make thee high above all nations, which he hath made in honour.* Isa. xliii. 4. *Since thou was precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable.* It is reckoned great honour to be a fellow of the royal society, to have fellowship with princes ; but what is fellowship with princes, to fellowship with the *Prince of the kings of the earth* ? And this honour hath all the *saints*. Particularly, it is said of Abraham, Jam. ii. 24. he was the *friend of God*. O incomparable title ! including more than king or emperor : and friendship is fellowship in exercise. By how much the distance is betwixt God and us, by so much proportionally must the dignity rise to be advanced to fellowship with God.—Further, I may here notice, that fellowship with those who are in authority above us, is apt to make us proud ; but fellowship with God, who is infinitely above us, is humbling, Job chap. xlii. 5, 6. 2 Sam. vii. 18. And likewise I may say, fellowship with those who are above us in authority is ready to make us peevish, and averse from others, sharing with us therein ; but fellowship with

God, who is infinitely above all, makes us desirous of others partaking with us therein, John iv. 28, 29. Acts xxvi. 29. *Agrippa said to Paul, Thou almost persuadest me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that not only you, but also all that hear me, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.* And how happy, how honourable a man had Agrippa been, if he had been as happy, as honourable as Paul was!

6. Learn how good and blessed God is in himself, and to men. God is good, and blessed in *himself*, Zech. ix. 17. *How great is his goodness!* 1 Tim. i. 11. *He is the blessed God.* If there had not been in the Godhead, or divine nature, three persons really distinct, rejoicing in, and speaking unto each other, there had not been a perfection of blessedness therein; for, much of sweetness lies in society: but there was from eternity in the Godhead three persons rejoicing in and speaking to each other, Prov. viii. 30. And so there was a perfection of blessedness in the Godhead from eternity.—God is also good and blessed unto *men*, Psa. lxxiii. i. Eph. i. 3. The persons in the Godhead would not be happy alone, by keeping their fulness wholly among themselves; no, no: they determined that believers should have all their fulness; not as to *essential sameness*, that is impossible; but as to *fruition*, so far as mere creatures are capable of. Accordingly Paul to the believing Corinthians, 1 Epist. i. 9. says, *God is faithful by whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.* Christ is God's fellow, Zech. xiii. 7. God found this fellowship so sweet as he hath

called you believers up to the participation of it. Ye are the vessels of mercy; and God is not a niggard, no, no; he is that ocean which will fill the vessels of mercy up to the brim, Rev. vii. 16, 17.

7. Learn a reason why believers sometimes *withdraw* from the company of fellow creatures? It is that they may have the fellowship of *converse* with God, their Creator and Redeemer, Matth. vi. 6. It is said of Jephtha, Judg. xi. 2. *He uttered all his words before the Lord in Mizpah*: upon his elevation to be the judge, he quickly retired to his devotion. Silence and solitude befriends our communion with God. Believers are never less alone than when alone: the less of the creature, the more of the Creator; the less of the creatures company, the more of the Creator's company. "My God and I are good company, said godly Sibbs."—And here learn a good apology for believers being sometimes *absent*, even while in company with fellow creatures; why? because they are in the fellowship of converse with God. I have read of Colonel Gardner, who appologized for his being so absent, by telling an intimate, "That his heart was flown upward, before he was aware, to him whom he loved; and that he was rejoicing in him with such unspeakable joy, that he could not hold it down to creature converse." We proceed,

2dly, To an use of *Reproof*, which we shall tender to two sorts of persons.

1. This text reproves these who *deny* such a thing as fellowship with God. Atheists scoff at it as enthusiasm, as fanaticism, as a cunningly devised fable:

but that fellowship with God is a thing as real in itself, as it is sweet in its nature, I might evince from the *relation* in which God stands to believers. God is their *Father*, and they are his *children*; and shall we say there is no such thing as fellowship betwixt father and children? Further, Christ is the *husband* of believers, and they are his *spouse*; and shall we say there is no such thing as fellowship betwixt husband and wife?—We must either renounce and deny all such relation betwixt God and believers, and thereby renounce and deny our Bibles, particularly our text, or else yield the conclusion, that there is a reality in fellowship with God.

2. This text reproves those professors of religion who are of a *contentious, carping, and divisive* spirit. To such Paul says, 1 Cor. iii. 3. *Whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions; are ye not carnal, and walk as men?* The envying, strife, and divisions, which were among them, he affirms, that they proceeded from the carnality of their hearts; surely the fellowship of such, with Christ, is at a low ebb: for Christ is the centre of all Christians; and, as lines, the nearer they are to the centre, the nearer they are to one another: and the further they are from the centre, the further they are from one another: so the nearer Christians are to Christ, the nearer they are to one another in affection; and the further they are from Christ, the further they are from one another. Ah! the divisions of the day are mournful; yet, to such who are aggrieved with these, I would say, Ponder the petition of Christ's prayer, John xvii. 20. 21. *I pray that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me,*

and I in thee ; that they may be one in us. Believers are one in the Father and Son, by having the Spirit of the Father and of the Son in them, as a principle of spiritual life and motion ; and the more they have of that Spirit, the more are they one with the Father and Son : and when they are one perfectly, with the Father and Son, who are one essentially and federately, they will be one perfectly among themselves ; no more differences among them, as there never was a difference betwixt the Father and the Son, whether considered as God or as God-man.

Use 3. The third use we proposed was for *Exhortation.*

1st, Let me address you, who have fellowship with God in the words of Paul to the Ephesians, chap. v. 8. *Walk as children of light : or, in the words of the text, Walk in the light, as God is in the light :* that is, go on, and increase, in the knowledge of God's will ; go on, and increase, in obedience to the will of God : *Let your conversation be in heaven ;* let your deportment be as men come down from heaven, not to tarry here, but quickly to return thither, and as if you were already in heaven. The more holy your walk is, the more sweet will your fellowship with God be, Isa. lxiv. 5. *Thou meetest him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteousness ; those that remember thee in thy way.* Here is the believer singing at his work ; and so he may, for God meets him ; yea, comes and makes his abode with him, John xiv. 22. *Judas, not Iscariot, saith unto Jesus, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world ?* Verse 23. *Jesus answered and*

said unto him, *If any man loves me, [no man loves Christ, but the man whom Christ first loves,] he will keep my words, i. e. my commandments; these he will keep in his desires and endeavours, and my Father will love him, viz. with a complacential love; not to regenerate, not to justify him in these respects: The Father loved the man before; and the Father's loving the man, in these respects before, was the cause of his love; and his love the cause of his keeping the commands; but my Father will love him, viz. with a love of delight and complacency; and we will come unto him; that is, my Father and I will come to him by the Spirit, and make our abode with him, viz. as to a settled sense of our love; not only will we love the obedient believer, but so rest in our love, as to impress on him a settled sense thereof. This is a singular attainment: of which, I have heard of two only in our day, whom the Lord thus denoted. One of them, whose intellectuals were a little touched by a deep Law-work, yet could, toward the close of her days, say, "Since my outgate, to this hour, which were several years, the Sun of righteousness hath constantly shone upon my soul without once withdrawing his warm beams."*

Further, I my say, although the duties of *obedience* be not the *meritorious* cause of the least smile of God's countenance; yet they are the *waggons* by which the Spirit carries our souls unto God, unto the embraces of God, 1 John. iii. 22, 23. But says one, Ah! my heart, my heart; I am thereby frequently plunged into the mire of mine own filthiness: fain would I have my heart conformed to God's heart;

but it is not so, and I cannot get it so. Alas ! what will become of me ? To this we answer, by asking, Why thou shouldest be dejected and cast down ? it is not more sure, that thou hast always within thee matter of mourning, than it is sure thou hast always without thee matter of rejoicing, *John i. 2. These things I write unto you, that ye sin not ; and if any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous : and he is the propitiation for our sins ;* that is, if any man who desires to be holy, defiles himself with unholiness ; yet let him not despair ; for Christ, as his advocate, pleads upon being the propitiation for his sin ; the faith of this would yield you relief : Be humble, but be not discouraged. — There is room for self abasement, but no room for dispondency ; for, the blood of Jesus, as a fountain, runs with you in the Gospel, read and preached, all your way through the desert, that thou mayst daily wash therein, and be whiter than the snow. — And so,

2^{dly}, I would address you in the words of Joshua to Achan, chap. vii. 19. *My Son, give glory to the Lord, and make confession unto him.* Some confess that they are sinners in *general*, and that they have broken all the commands ; and yet, as to *particulars*, they will not cordially take with *one* sin ; and so have no benefit by that blood which *cleanseth from all sin*. But the more fellowship ye have with God, the more secret sins God will discover unto you ; and the more ye will disclose again to God, Psa. xix. 12. *Who can understand his errors ? cleanse thou me from secret faults.* Indeed, I must say, confessing of sin

hath no *causal* influence on the remission of it ; howbeit, the confessing of sin is the most *fit* way of professing and publishing the grace of God in the remission thereof, through the blood of Jesus. The law of fellowship betwixt two, as friends, requires, that if the one sins against the other, he confesses it. If ye ask, How ye are to confess your sin ? We answer, As Aaron confessed the iniquity of the children of Israel, Lev. xvi. 21. He confessed their iniquity with his hands on the *head* of the live goat, *putting them upon the head of the goat* : so ye are to confess your sins, with the hand of faith upon *Christ*, the propitiation for sin : ye are to confess them as atoned-for sins ; as sins the Son of God made atonement for. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*, 1 John i. 9. God promised to Christ, that he would *pardon* our sins, because he was *wounded* for them : if, therefore, he did not forgive us, he would neither be faithful nor just to Christ ; but God is faithful and just to Christ, and therefore he will forgive our sins. When the debt is paid, it is a righteous thing with God to cancel the bond.

3dly, I would address you in the words of David, Psa. c. 14. and cvii. 1, 8. *Be ye thankful. O that ye would praise the Lord for his goodness to you.* In Luke xvii. 15. we have an account of *ten* Lepers cleansed, and only *one* gave thanks. This one praised God ; and Christ praiseth this one. Ye have received answers of prayer ; O return his answers with

a letter of praise and thanks. As the highest use that could be made of *beasts*, under the law, was to make them *sacrifices* to God; so, the highest use of the *faculties of the soul*, is to employ them in *thanking* and *praising* God. Praise is the great ordinance of fellowship in the state of perfection in heaven, whither the tribes of the Lord go up to give thanks to the name of the Lord. God has made your hearts glad on earth; therefore make his praise glorious; saying, as in Rev. i. 5, 6. *Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.*

4thly, I would address you in the words of Paul to the Philippians, chap. iv. 6. *In every thing by prayer let your requests be made known unto God.* A man gets much of heaven into his heart by praying, even for earthly things, if he pray in a spiritual manner; and the reason is, because in praying, he draws nigh unto, and converses with God; and thereby he is influenced to more holiness, though holiness be not the particular matter of the prayer.

5thly, I would address you in the words of Paul to the Thessalonians, 1 Epist. chap. v. 22. *Abstain from all appearance of evil.* Beware of all such fellowship as hath a tendency to marr your fellowship of converse with God, Eph. v. 11. *Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.* The unfruitful works of darkness, are uncleanness, fornication, covetousness, filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting, verse 3, 4. These

ye are to have no fellowship with; *but rather reprove them.* More particularly, I advise you,

1. To beware of *fellowship with the wicked, the workers of iniquity.* This advice the apostle tenders unto the Corinthians, 2 Epist. vi. 14, 17, 18. *Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers: come out from among them; be ye separate, saith the Lord: touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, viz. unto my tabernacle, the chamber of presence; and there ye shall converse with me as familiarly as sons and daughters with a father. I will be a Father unto you; and ye shall be my sons and daughters saith the Lord Almighty.*

2. I advise you to beware of *indulging lusts in your heart.* This advice the apostle tenders to the Romans, chap. vi. 12. *Let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.* Your heart is, as it were, the marriage-bed; and will ye suffer Christ's rivals to creep into the bed of love? If ye suffer this, it will breed estrangement in you from him; and then he will justly complain of you, as in Jer. ii. 5. *What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me?* As if he had said, Your fathers, yourselves, and I, have been better acquainted in time past: what cause have I given for their, for your estrangement from me? Yea, if ye suffer this, God will cast you out of fellowship, not indeed out of the fellowship of co-partnership, nor out of the fellowship of interest; but out of the fellowship of converse, Psa. lxvi. 18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not*

bear me ; no, no ; tho' king of Israel, Psa. xciv. 20. *Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee?* No, no. This fellowship of converse may, and doth consist with the *inbeing* of sin ; but not with an *impenitent* disposition under the inbeing of it ; not with the entertaining of it in the heart. Sin entertained in the heart, having the consent of the will, sometimes breaks out into these actions, which, if known to the church, she would justly eject the actor from her communion : and though God, for holy and wise ends, may hide these actions from the church ; yet God excommunicates the actor from the fellowship of converse with himself.

3. I advise you to beware of an *evil heart of unbelief*. This advice the apostle gives to the Hebrews, chap. iii. 12. *Take heed, Brethren, lest there be any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.* By an unbelieving heart men depart from the living God : and what is more opposite to fellowship with God, than departing from him ? If faith be not exercised in the ordinances, thy worship is formal, and so rejected of God. If faith be not exercised, thou sleepest, and so cannot entertain Christ, Song v. 2. If faith be exercised, thou art awake, and entertains Christ. " Faith, faith one, " is an engine to bring down God unto us." And as God sometimes seated himself betwixt the cherubims ; so, frequent believing thoughts of God, are the seat of God in our souls : and so, be not as the wicked, of whom it is said, Psal. x. 4. *God is not in all their thoughts* ; but as Paul, who says, Gal. ii. 20.

I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

And so, finally, I advise you, when ye fall into sin, beware of going to any other fountain, but the blood of Jesus, for cleansing the conscience from the guilt of it, and the heart from the love of it. Sin is blotted out of an accusing conscience, that it may be purged out of the affections. To this fountain David had recourse upon his fall into murder and adultery, Psal. li. 7. “ The circle, as
 “ Bining says, the believer is to move in, is to turn
 “ from pardon to purity; and from pollution again
 “ to pardon again; avoiding the quick-sands of pre-
 “ sumptuous wantonness, turning the grace of God
 “ into lasciviousness, and the rock of desperate dis-
 “ trust, as if there were no pardon for sins aggravated
 “ with preceeding mercy and grace in God.” Sirs,
 the blood of Jesus is of perpetual use for pardon, un-
 til purity be fully attained. The Christian religion,
 is the religion of sinners; of such as have sinned,
 and in whom sin still dwells: for, *if we say we have
 no sin, we deceive ourselves; but the blood of Jesus
 Christ, cleanseth from all Sin.*

To conclude, let me address myself to these who have *no fellowship* with God.

1st, In the words of Christ to the unbelieving Jews, John viii. 44. *Ye are of your father the devil.* O Sirs, for your conviction, consider whom ye have fellowship with; ye have fellowship with *Devils* in sin and misery, Eph. ii. 2. *The Prince of the power of the air works and rules in the hearts of the children of disobedience.* Ye may more properly be cal-

led *Demoniacks*, than those whose bodies were possessed of the devil; for he possesses your *souls*: and being a spirit, he can join himself more closely to spirits than to bodies. These qualities which made him a devil are in you, tho' in an inferior degree; as pride, malice, aversion at God, and the godly. In 1 Cor. x. 10. the apostle says, *I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils, viz. in drinking the cup of devils, in partaking of the table of devils, verse 21. In Idolatry, verse 7. Neither be ye idolaters, as some of them. In fornication, verse 8. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed. In tempting Christ, verse 9. Neither let us tempt Christ, etc. In murmuring verse 10. Neither murmur, as some of them also murmured.* "If, says one, "the vail could be taken away, men would see, "that while they are gratifying lusts, they are in "twining and coupling with serpents, with devils." I therefore, or rather the Lord, says unto you, *Except ye be born again ye cannot see the kingdom of God; no, no. If ye die in that state, ye shall have fellowship with the devil in eternal torments, Matth. xxv. 41. Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. Howbeit, ye are yet prisoners of hope: there is hope in Israel concerning you.* And so,

2dly, I would address you in the words of Paul to the Jailor, Acts xvi. 31. *Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved.* The foundation of man's fellowship with Christ, is laid in their union to Christ: and their union to Christ, is by their believ-

ing in him, John i. 2. Now, because faith is wrought by hearing the gospel, accompanied with the Holy Ghost, sent down from heaven, let me therefore preach the gospel to you : and so, by way of motive, consider,

1. That the persons in the *Godhead* are inclined and disposed to creature-fellowship. There is a proneness in each person to creature-communion : there is a proneness in the *Father* to creature-communion ; and therefore he says, Isa. xlii. i. *Behold, my servant, whom I uphold.* There is a proneness in the *Son* unto creature-communion ; and therefore he says, Isa. lxv. i. *Behold me, behold me.* There is a proneness in the *Spirit* unto creature-communion, Rev. xxii. 17. *The Spirit says, Come,* viz. to Christ.

2. This fellowship is affected by the *Spirit*, 2 Cor. xv. 14. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all :* that is, the grace of Jesus, and the love of God the Father, are communicated to you by the Spirit ; for the *Spirit receives, and takes of the things of Christ, and shews to us*, John xvi. 14, 15. *And the Spirit sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts*, Rom. v. 5. To this purpose is that prayer, 2 Thess. iii. v. *The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.* There is a prayer to the Spirit ; let this prayer, be our prayer. The Lord, the Holy Ghost, direct our hearts into the love of God the Father, and into the patience of Christ ; into a patient waiting for him from heaven.

3. His name is *Jesus*; 1 John iv. 14. *We have seen, and do testify, the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.* The strength of sin is such, that, like Goliath, it defies the whole host of heaven and earth; it can be vanquished by no other hand: and he is able to destroy it, Heb. vii. 25. *He is able to save to the uttermost, all that come unto God by him.* And he is as willing as able to save; and hence, in John v. 40. he complains that men will not come unto him for life.

4. He is *the Christ*; which signifies, *the anointed.* As the holy aunction was given unto Prophets, Priests, and Kings; so Jesus, being the anointed, says, he is a Prophet, Priest, and King, John xiv. 6. These offices, eminently meeting in him, he will chearfully execute over them who believe, John vi. 37.

5. His *blood* is the blood of the *Son of God*; and so his blood is the blood of that person who is the Father's equal, Phil. ii. 6. *He was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God.* Upon mentioning so rich a treasure of blood as the blood of the Son of God, the partical *all* is but a rational consequent: *it cleanseth us from ALL sin,* without exception. If it be the blood of the Son of God, it cannot but cleanse from all sin; it is as sufficient now as ever: and as there is no exception of sins, as to the cleansing efficiency of this blood, let there be none in your apprehension, in your application to it.

But says a sinner, Were I *penitent*, I would be encouraged thereby to believe in Christ. To this we reply, That *repentance* is a chief branch of salvation; and Christ is exalted to *give* that, as well as remission of sin. What! would ye who are lost save yourselves, in order to your coming to the Saviour! would ye who are sick heal yourselves, in order to your coming to the Physician! would ye who are fallen into the mire wash yourselves, in order to come to the fountain! How absurd is this objection! It is only the blood of Jesus that *cleanseth from all sin*.—I further observe here, that this *blood* cannot be without *water*, 1 John v. 6. And because the water of the sanctifying Spirit, runs in, and is conveyed by, that channel of blood, it therefore may be said to cleanse from the *power* and *pollution*, as well as from the *guilt* of all sin.

But says another, The *greatness* of my guilt frights me; my sins are of an uncommon kind; I think I am the greatest sinner that ever was. Unto you I would say,

1. Paul thought so too of himself, 1 Tim. i. 15. *Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief*. And you do not think suitably of yourself, till you think of *whom I am chief*.

2. Some person, that goes to heaven, has on earth been the greatest sinner; and what if thou beest the person who shall be deepest in grace's debt.

3. However great thy sins be, yet there is more in the blood of Jesus to save, than in all thy sins to damn thee, Rom. v. 17. For,

4. Your sins are but the sins of a creature, whereas the blood of Jesus is the *blood of God*, Acts xx. 28. O what a phrase is this, the blood of God ! not the blood of *men*, but the blood of *God*. If it be the blood of God, the merit of it is as far above the demerit of thy sin ; as God is above man, as the person of Christ is above thy person. *All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men : Come then, saith the Lord God, and let us reason together ; although your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow. I, even I am he that blotteth out thine iniquity. I will be merciful to your unrighteousness, your sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Do ye now believe ? If so, walk in the light, as God is in the light.* “ Art, as one says, is the imitation of nature ; and true religion is a divine art, which consists in the imitation of God himself, who is the “ Author of nature, and God of all grace.” *If we walk in the light, as God is in the light, we have fellowship one with another ; and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.*

T H E E N D.

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